

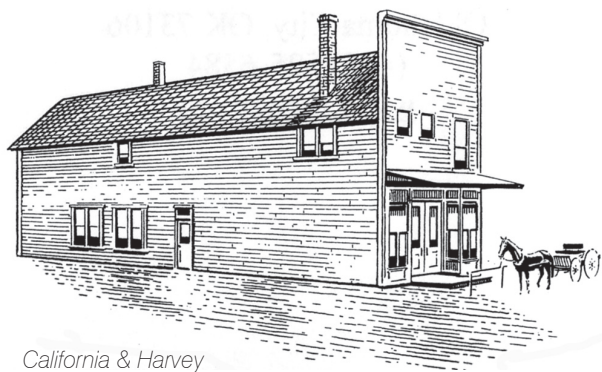
**“Well, parson, you certainly have given our city a fine start!”**

– Mayor William L. Couch to the Rev. C. C. Hembree after worship on the Sunday after the Land Run, 1889.

## FROM 1889 TO STATEHOOD

Our deep and rich history goes all the way back to April 28, 1889, the Sunday after the Land Run. **It was the first church service held in Oklahoma City**, and was conducted by a Presbyterian minister, the Rev. Charles C. Hembree, who gathered folks around the water well at the intersection of Main Street and Broadway for worship, including a 45-minute sermon on “Christian Warfare” from II Timothy 3:3. After the service, Captain Couch, then Mayor, shook hands with Rev. Hembree and declared, “Well, parson, you certainly have given our city a fine start!”

The Presbyterian presence continued, nurtured by Rev. Hembree, and on **November 3, 1889, while still Oklahoma Territory, First Presbyterian Church was officially chartered as a Mission Church**, with Rev. Willis Miller from the Presbyterian Board of Home Missions, who became the organizing pastor. He looked after the faithful flock of 36 Charter Members for many years.



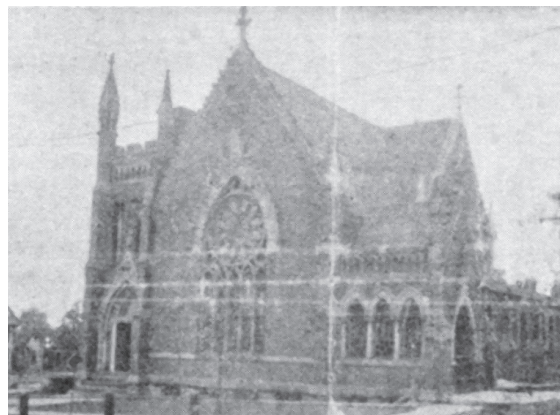
California & Harvey

For a couple months before that, the congregation had met in a rudimentary building located at California and Harvey, until October of that year when the first church building was erected at Main Street west of Robinson. It was a two-story brick building, with the pastor and his wife living upstairs.

The Rev. Fredrick W. Hawley, just out of McCormick Seminary, became the first installed pastor of the church in 1892, and the first pastor installed in the new Synod of Oklahoma. In 1894, the congregation became self-supporting. An interesting note from the Treasurer’s report that year, shows all debts paid and a balance of \$12.00 in the treasury. Few, if any institutions in Oklahoma, can claim such a long and high credit rating as ours!

With the help of solid leadership and a focus on mission, by 1901, the congregation’s first building had become totally inadequate, and a new brick church was erected on the southwest corner of Sixth and Broadway, with the first service there on April 6, 1902.

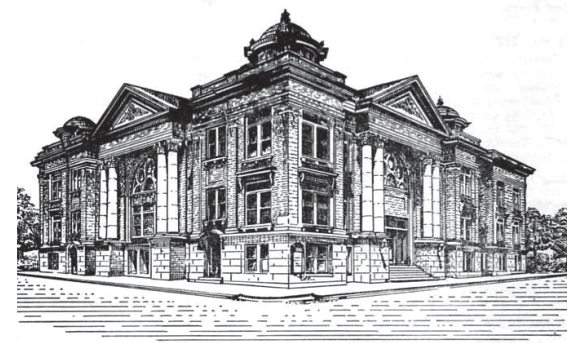
From its earliest roots, First Church has been interested in mission. **In 1903, the church became instrumental in launching the first welfare agency in our city, the Provident Association in Oklahoma City.**



6th & Broadway

## FROM STATEHOOD TO 1948

By 1907, the church had grown to 500. Rev. Phil Baird was called to be pastor, and the church flourished. The 6th Street Church soon proved inadequate. On September 25, 1909, the cornerstone for a new building was laid at N. Robinson and 9th Street.



9th & Robinson

Having instituted Sunday School classes, Women’s circles, and “Junior Church” the congregation was flourishing, under Dr. Baird’s leadership. By 1920, the Sunday School classes were overflowing into adjoining buildings. So on a Saturday in 1921, using volunteer help, a substantial building sufficient to hold 400 persons was erected and ready for use the next morning.

In 1923, Dr. Baird died of influenza, but this was not before **the church grew to 2000 members under his leadership.**

First Church has always been interested in missionary projects. In 1920, the Home Mission Board made our church a sort of big brother to all Home Mission work in Oklahoma City. Many members in our past have gone on to the mission field, ministry, and education, especially a number of women.